



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

A Tri-Annual Publication of the George C. Clark Missouri Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation

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NWTF Exceeds 1.5 Million Hunters Goal Three Years Early

EDGEFIELD, S.C.

More than 1.5 million new or formerly lapsed hunters are hitting the woods thanks to the National Wild Turkey Federation and its partners.

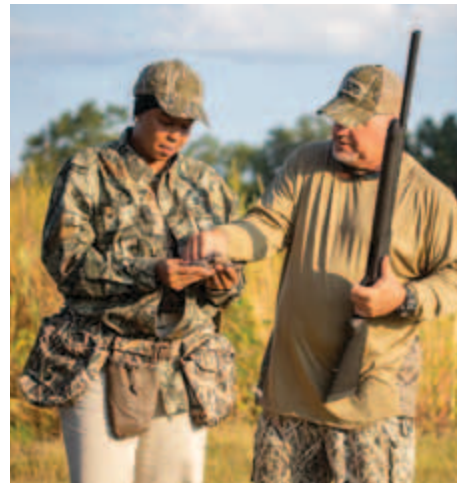
By NWTF chapters and volunteers working with state wildlife agencies and conservation partners across the country, the NWTF exceeded its Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative 10-year goal by recruiting and reactivating nearly 1,527,000 hunters three years ahead of schedule.

“A general decline in hunters since the 1980s has been a direct threat to a cherished outdoor

lifestyle and a crucial funding source for conservation work in the United States,” NWTF CEO Becky Humphries said. “The NWTF recognized this trend early and was at the forefront of finding solutions to reverse the decline. Our efforts to help develop and implement hunter Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation programs along with our partners have made a tremendous impact, but we still have a long way to go to completely reverse the trend.”

NWTF chapters and volunteers took up the call and have supported these efforts by hosting mentored hunts, hunter education classes,

learn-to-hunt clinics, wild game cooking sessions and a number of other events to attract lapsed hunters as well as new-to-hunting adults and youth to the outdoors.



Reducing barriers was also key. The Families Afield partnership with the National Shooting Sports Foundation and the Sportsmen’s Alliance works through policy makers and regulatory offices to increase opportunities and reduce barriers, such as age restrictions on young hunters and the creation of apprentice licenses that allow first-timers to experience hunting under the supervision of an experienced hunter before going through a hunter education class.

“The Save the Hunt. goal of 1.5 million hunters was part of a greater action by a large network of

Continued on page 12.

The Spring River Toms Hold Another Successful Jakes Event

The Carthage, Mo. Spring River Toms Chapter of The National Wild Turkey Federation held their Annual NWTF JAKES/Xtreme JAKES Event on September 28th, 2019. This was the 9th year that they have held this event. All that attended had a great time participating in the various stations introducing them to a variety of outdoor recreational activities. The chapter looks forward to hosting this annual event, and is grateful for the assistance they received that made it all possible. The following organizations and people offered their time to man the following stations: Missouri Department of Conservation Law Enforcement Staff providing instruction on shotgun patterning, archery, manned a trailer with displays on both sides, and provided instruction on furbearer identification. Mountain man Dusty Henderson & family provided instruction on muzzleloader shooting, tomahawk and knife throwing. Jasper County Sheriff’s Deputy, George Datum, put on a demonstration with his drug dog. Brad Johnson & Shirley Rutledge from Jasper, Mo. Fire Department were present to discuss the equipment they use and the job they do. The chapter would also like to thank their event sponsors that included Carthage Walmart and National Hunting and Fishing Day, Springfield.



From The President

By Dan Zerr

Dear Chapter Members,

Due to computer ineptitude on my part, I missed saying hello to all of you in the last issue in the last issue of the Sho-Me Gobbler. Hopefully that has been corrected now.

For those of you who don't know me, my name is Dan Zerr, I have been a long time member of the National Wild Turkey Federation, a long time member of the State Board, very active in my local chapter, and very proud to serve you as State Chapter President. Also, a delayed thank you to R.L. Bennett for the excellent work he has done as the preceding State Chapter President.

Many things have come across the table since March, one of those was a concern over the health of our wild turkey flock. Rest assured that NWTF is committed to putting dollars on the ground, enhancing habitat through the Save The Habitat initiative. This commitment is making a difference. Also the Missouri Department of Conservation has had a history of very conservative season lengths, and bag limits. Know that MDC is monitoring the situation, and if the time comes to make hard decisions, they will not be afraid to act.

We are sad to bid farewell to Jason Isabell, our former Turkey Biologist. He has decided to move on to cervid section of MDC research and will be working on the CWD program there.

We wish him the best in his new venture, and congratulations on his new adventure of being a dad. We also bid a heartfelt welcome to Reina Tyl, the new Turkey Biologist. In her interview she has demonstrated a "wow" factor that has impressed turkey enthusiasts across the state. We are eagerly looking forward to working with her.

There has been some upheaval in the NWTF due to a financial crunch, resulting in some changes. Several chapters will be begin new relationships with maybe a new Regional Director.

Like many of you I despise change. However this is a unique opportunity to bring a fresh start and new ideas to our efforts. As always with your dedication and hard work, we can make this work. We will be better for it.

After retiring last spring after 46 years on the job, many people wondered, "what was I going to do? How will I spend my time? For me the answer was easy. This is exactly what I wanted to do. To be your State Chapter President, to represent you, work for you, and further the good work of the NWTF. I will do my best to fulfill that mission.

With hunting season in full swing, good luck and be careful out there. With the Holidays right around the corner may everyone be blessed.

*Thanks For All You Do,
Dan*

Turkey Donations Helps Communities

By Brian Duckett

The Bootheel Boss Gobblers donated 12 turkeys to Ron Cook of Curley's Kitchen for a free community Thanksgiving meal! They donated 12 turkeys to the Salvation Army for a free Thanksgiving meal and 8 more turkeys to the Women's Safe House to put in the food basket! This was all paid for by the Bootheel Boss Gobblers! My helper was chapter member, Paul Strickland.



Curley's Kitchen donation.



Salvation Army donation.



Women's Safe House donation.

Correction: In the Summer 2019 issue of The Show Me Gobbler, we neglected to give credit to the author of "What is Happening to Missouri's Wild Turkey Population...". The credit is to be given to NWTF Regional Biologist, John Burk.



SHOW-ME GOBBLER

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE: The Show-Me Gobbler is published three times per year by the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation and is circulated statewide to its membership as well as other interested parties. As the official publication of the George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation, the Show-Me Gobbler serves to inform, educate and entertain wild turkey enthusiasts throughout Missouri and is committed to supporting conservation through sound wildlife management, and sport hunting through safety and ethics education.

ARTICLE SUBMISSION NOTE:

The staff of the Show-Me Gobbler thank you for your contributions to the publication. Please feel free to submit future articles with photos to the contact information listed on the back page of this issue. Submission requirements: Digital copy submitted in Microsoft Word. (please contact us if you can only send hard copy) Digital photographs are preferred but will be accepted as snapshots if supplied to the editor. When scanning your own photos, please use at least 225 resolution (dpi) but no more than 400 dpi, saved as a .jpg, .tiff or .eps. Photos submitted outside of these guidelines may not be suitable for printing. Please include photo captions and credits for each photo submitted. Photos will not be returned. Thanks again for your contributions and we look forward to your participation in the future.

Wild Turkey Production and Fall Firearms Turkey Harvest Report

By Reina M. Tyl - Resource Scientist
Missouri Department of Conservation

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) has conducted a wild turkey brood survey annually since 1959. During the survey, MDC staff and citizen volunteers record turkey observations during June, July, and August to determine the success of the hatch. Data are collected at the county level and reported statewide and by Turkey Productivity Region, which are counties grouped by similar land cover composition. Each year, hundreds of staff and thousands of citizens participate in the survey and we are grateful for their contribution.

This year's statewide poult-to-hen ratio (PHR) from the turkey brood survey was 0.9, which was the same as the 2018 ratio and 21% less than the previous five-year average. This year's PHR was 29%

less than the 10-year average and 38% less than the 20-year average. Regional PHRs in 2019 ranged from 0.7 in the Ozark Border Region to 1.7 in the Mississippi Lowlands Region. Compared to the five-year averages, production in 2019 was higher in the Mississippi Lowlands Region and lower in the remaining 8 regions.

During this year's survey, 34% of hens were observed with a brood at the statewide scale, which was down from 36% in 2018 and was 13% less than the five-year average. Regionally, the percentage of hens observed with a brood ranged from 25% in the Northeast Region to 57% in the Mississippi Lowlands Region. Statewide, the average number of poults per brood was 3.7, which was down from 3.8 in 2018 and 7% less than the five-year average. Regionally, the average number of poults per brood ranged from 3.3 in the West Prairie Region to 4.4 in the Mississippi Lowlands Region.

Hunters harvested 1,952 turkeys during Missouri's 2019 fall firearms turkey season, which ran from Oct. 1–31. Harvest this year was down about 10% from last year's fall firearms turkey harvest total of 2,169. Top harvest counties were Crawford and Greene with 61 birds harvested in each, followed by Laclede with 59 and Phelps with 58.

This year's fall firearms turkey harvest was impacted primarily by the poor hatch. Near record-low production this year resulted in fewer young birds for hunters to pursue this fall. With fewer than 10,000 hunters purchasing a permit, this year's fall firearms turkey permit sales total was the lowest on record since the season started in 1978. Interest in the fall firearms turkey season has been declining since the mid-to-late 1980s in Missouri when nearly 53,000 permits were purchased.

New Forester Hired In Southern Missouri

Partnerships remain extremely important in the growth and accomplishments of NWTF and their goals of conservation of the wild turkey. These partnerships are essential to the Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. 10-year initiative and allow NWTF to develop conservation positions in new locations. Recently, Will Rechkemmer was hired as a forester in Houston, MO and will be partnering with the United States Forest Service and Natural Resource Conservation Service to achieve habitat management goals, particularly forest management within southern Missouri on private and Forest Service owned lands.



Will Rechkemmer

Will earned a B.S. and M.S. in Biology with an emphasis in ecology, from Western Illinois University. Throughout Will's master's he studied prescribed fire effects within open oak woodlands of west-central Illinois. During this time, Will became passionate about the use

of prescribed fire as a tool to restore oak woodlands in the Midwest. Will is particularly interested in the use of timber stand improvement (TSI) in conjunction with prescribed fire to diversify and restore open woodlands and glades. Among Will's passions, he also enjoys spending his free time wing shooting in the fall and turkey hunting in the spring.

Will's position will be centered around improving oak woodlands and forests within National Forest land in Southern Missouri, as well as private land in Texas, Howell, Dent, Shannon and Oregon counties. Within National Forests, projects will primarily include timber management and restoration of open spaces such as, removal of cedars from glade communities and removal of brush from historically open areas. On private land he will focus on assisting landowners achieve their management objectives through Cost-share opportunities (EQIP) with the USDA NRCS Field Offices in the five-county area. Some common practices Will may provide guidance on include timber stand improvement, prescribed fire, invasive species, and woodland/glade restoration. He will also be available to meet with landowners to ensure practices were completed properly and provide additional technical information. If you live in the five-county area and are interested in habitat management options for your property please contact Will at (319) 572-3887 or wrechkemmer@nwtf.net and he will be happy to speak to you about your goals.



The Current River Callers Support Gods Pro Staff

For the past 2 years the Current River Callers in Winona Missouri have applied for super fund grant money to help Greg Buckner with his efforts to provide high quality mentored youth hunts. Greg's program is called Gods Pro Staff (GPS) and he and his friends use outdoor opportunities to touch the souls of youngsters and get them pointed

in the right direction. Greg annually hosts very successful youth turkey and deer hunts that reach a dozen to 2 dozen kids during each of these hunts. This past youth season 11 young hunters harvested 9 deer. Efforts like this are a great fit for the NWTF mission and are helping move the needle with hunter recruitment, reactivation, and retention.

Forest Management Practices Beneficial To Wild Turkeys

By Tyler Cooper — NWTf NFI Forester

The wild turkey is a very adaptive bird and the five subspecies exist throughout the U.S. in every state other than Alaska. Although turkeys are adaptive there is one thing every one of the subspecies requires and that is trees. Every night turkeys fly up and find a suitable limb to roost on just before dark and remain there until sunrise. I'm not saying everywhere there are turkeys there are forests, but there are typically, at a minimum, a small drainage or fence row lined with trees anywhere a turkey calls home.

The fact that these birds that we love so dearly need trees in their life brings me to the heart of this article. Even though I previously mentioned there are not always forests where there are turkeys this article is going to focus mainly on small to large tracts of continuous forest because it is difficult to do meaningful management on the limited number of trees in a fence row or very small drainage lined with timber. Forest management can be made up of just one practice, or many practices to achieve an overall healthy forest that is beneficial to all native wildlife including the wild turkey. Using a variety of practices will meet the different requirements in the turkey's annual life cycle.

The most common forest management practice we hear about and use is TSI (timber stand improvement) or FSI (forest stand improvement). This essentially means the thinning of overstocked forests with too many trees competing for limited resources. Too many trees? Is that possible? Yes, in fact when trees are overcrowded and over competing for space, sunlight, and nutrients in the soil it, causes those trees to be suppressed and become undesirable trees for timber value as well as stunting their growth. Even if you have no interest in how many board feet your turkey woods can produce a tall, straight, non-stunted tree also produces more fruit (in most cases across the Midwest this means ACORNS!). We all know that turkeys and other wildlife love acorns. Another

benefit to TSI is when thinning some of those non-desirable trees out to release the desirables from over competition we are creating openings in the canopy. These openings allow sunlight to reach the forest floor during the growing season. This in turn allows for more vigorous growth of desirable non shade-tolerant species such as oak at the ground level. This eventually results in your oak-hickory forest being regenerated with desirable species growing healthy and making it to be a dominant overstory tree.

A thinning is typically based at 1 of 3 levels light, medium, and heavy. These are strictly based on the density of the forest before the thinning. A heavy TSI will leave lots of downed woody cover where as a light will have a tree here or there downed. There are different methods of thinning trees that result in different downed woody debris rates. For example you can use a method called hack and squirt which girdles the tree with a chemical, or you can girdle standing live trees with a double ring cut with a chainsaw, both of these methods result in your trees still standing which means less thick downed cover for turkeys to avoid. The longer you leave your forest unmanaged the more overstocked it will become resulting in more work to get it back to a healthy state. Another form of TSI is something called Crop Tree Release (CTR). CTR is very effective and leaves very little woody debris left over. The principle behind a CTR is simple. If your forest is just barely overstocked and at a healthy state but it has just a few desirable species such as oaks and hickories present in the overstory, then you release those species by thinning around individual trees. For example if you have a 20 acre patch of timber and you have 15 oak trees per acre than you would find those good quality trees and clear the trees within 20-40ft of them. This allows the same affect as TSI and the same benefits just on a smaller scale.

Another great forest management practice is prescribed burning. This should only ever be implemented with proper training and safety

equipment. Prescribed burning is a wonderful tool in a woodland setting and can be used in a forest setting as well. Implementing a prescribed burn in early spring, typically around March, allows the fire to knock back thick woody vegetation and non-native species, as well as promote native shrubs, forbs, and grasses to grow. If an area is burned, it is best to implement these burns in cycles, preferably every 2-3 year cycles. The key to a good prescribed burn is to do the burn with the right weather conditions and enough help to ensure the burn goes smoothly. A perfect woodland burn would typically have low flame heights around 2-3 ft and a slow burn to really clean up the leaf litter. This type of burn allows for minimal damage to the large trees and breaks down the leaf litter into nutrients for the soil quickly. This also allows sunlight to reach the forest floor and as stated earlier, boosts the regrowth of native vegetation.

Edge feathering is another management practice that can be implemented on stands that are bordered by a field. This practice simply drops some of the trees on, or just inside the edge of the stand so that the tops fall into, and near the edge of the field. This breaks up the straight edge between either agricultural fields or native grass fields and mature timber. This creates a soft edge effect and allows for more habitat diversity providing escape and brood rearing and nesting cover with the woody and herbaceous vegetation that will rapidly respond. This management practice is also a very popular management technique that benefits rabbits and quail.

Last but not least, brush management within forested areas is a very popular and necessary practice. Brush management is very important and often neglected. This is the removal of unwanted and mostly invasive species (especially bush honeysuckle) from the mid and understory of the forest. This practice should always be done first if there is any thinning prescribed. If you thin before taking care of invasive or unwanted species in the understory you will allow more

sunlight for them to vigorously spread and grow. Most of our invasive species will grow so thick in the understory that certain animal species such as turkeys will move out of the area due to the difficulty to navigate through the ground layer.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, some of these practices benefit turkeys in different ways. I will briefly discuss the benefits and adversities of some of these practices. If your desired outcome is more turkeys (whos' isn't), in my personal opinion, it is recommended to do a mix of these practices such as TSI, edge feathering, and prescribed burning in corresponding years. TSI is a long-term beneficial practice due to the fact that turkeys initially won't spend much time in heavily thinned areas due to the thick woody debris left over, because of this I recommend a combination of thinning methods with minimal felling and more girdled trees if your goal is better turkey habitat. After 2-4 years though, the debris will rot away and the increase in mast production of your timber will draw and hold birds on your land. If desired to increase the return rate of the open understory benefit, prescribed burns can be used to reduce the amount of debris present on the forest floor and keeps the woody response at bay. If this is something you desire, I recommend at least waiting 2 years after a completed TSI so the fine fuels of small twigs and branches are broken down. For increased activity in the timber a woodland burn is great. Studies show that the optimal stocking level for turkeys is 70-80BA which is typically near optimal stocking for midwestern forests. As stated earlier in this article if you have the intentions of performing a TSI on your property it is highly recommended you identify and eradicate any invasive species present through brush management practices. Springs when a burn has been completed is a wonderful place to hunt a gobbling longbeard. They like the open understory for not only a good strut zone, but the ease of finding available acorns and

fresh new vegetative growth on the bare ground. The green shoots that respond after a burn also produces high protein forage needed for egg production and the gobblers are going to be where the hens are. An added bonus to controlled spring burns is when done properly, the rest years in between burns result in wonderful nesting and brood habitat for the hens and poults. When done in a rotation, you can have pre-breeding conditioning areas adjacent to nesting and brood rearing habitat.

Edge feathering is a great practice to increase brood sizes and survival rates in an area that has a hard edge from field to timber. Another land management practice, not forestry specific, is the re-introduction of warm season grasses and native forbs. Converting old fields or pasture ground to native vegetation is wonderful habitat for turkeys. It creates great brood habitat for nesting birds and, as mentioned before, on years where a burn occurs, can result in great hunting.

All of these practices may be possible to implement on one single piece of property with a good practice schedule. The best way to develop a schedule like this is to contact a professional Forester who can visit you and your property and discuss your management objectives with you. They then can inventory your property and develop a forest management plan that breaks your property into easily defined stands and includes recommendations and best practices for each of those

stands. These forest management plans also include a practice schedule. It is always recommended to get a management plan before implementing any practices. Another benefit to having a forest management plan is it allows you to more easily qualify for cost share programs through the NRCS and other conservation services. For more information on finding a forester near you, contact your local or state conservation office. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/mo/home/>

Uncle Kenny

By NWTf Staff Writer David Gladkowski

Born and raised in Missouri, Kenny Haas — better known by most as Uncle Kenny — is a 98-year-old World War II veteran and the only living member from a crew of nearly 20 who served alongside him in the Pacific Theatre on a PT boat.

Despite being in his 90s, he is still an avid turkey hunter and angler. Kenny says he has made it to 98 because of his nephew Mark Haas' adamancy to take him turkey hunting each season.

It's easy to overlook those individuals who gave us our start with hunting and the outdoors. They taught us to be quiet and not to fidget in the blind or how to field dress an animal. The list goes on. And it is usually the older generation passing down these time-honored traditions.

While Mark's dad taught him how to hunt small game and fish, his dad passed away in the mid '90s. Since then, Mark, now 68, has been taking his Uncle Kenny turkey hunting every spring and fall season, in addition to their weekly fishing trips.

Uncle Kenny may be approaching 100 years of age, but that does not keep him from driving himself to the senior center every day for lunch, going fishing or, his favorite, going turkey hunting.

"Some days I get tired because I am no spring chicken myself; I'm in my sixties," Mark said. "Recently, I asked my Uncle Kenny, 'Hey can we take a day off from turkey hunting?' and Uncle Kenny said, 'Sure, no problem.' The

next day I asked if he got some rest, and he said, 'Yeah, I went crappie fishing.'"

It was only five years ago when Mark and Kenny would go into the turkey woods and go their separate ways, meeting back at the truck at 11 a.m. to see who got a gobbler. However, once Kenny turned 94, the duo thought it would be best if they started hunting together.

"Nowadays, I do the calling and he does the shooting," Mark said. "I don't even carry a gun anymore; if he can get a turkey, then that is all I need. I have killed my share of turkeys.

"There are not many World War II vets left, and we are losing them fast. If you know one or know someone that is older, make the extra effort to take them out hunting or fishing; you might not know how much it could mean to them."



Please consider sharing your story in the Show Me Gobbler Publication
Updated submission deadline is — April 15, July 15 & November 30

The George C. Clark Missouri State Chapter Member Harvest Page

Share your outdoor experiences with your NWTF peers, PLEASE submit them to John Burk at jb Burk@nwtf.net with a brief photo description and they will be considered for the harvest page section of your Show Me Gobbler newsletter.



Josh Odell with Ray County Short Spurs JAKES.



Lisa Beumer of Walt Beumer Chapter had a great year. Lisa took a buck in St Charles County, Missouri, and another buck in Oklahoma.



Ben Edwards of WBMC Missouri and Illinois buck taken same day.



Lacey Oesch is a member of the Midstate Chapter with a fine Adair County rifle buck.



Alisa Uptain is a member of the Locust Creek Longbeards. She shot this main frame 8pt while hunting in Northern MO on opening day.



Darren Jones, President of the David Blanton Memorial Chapter (Mountain Grove) with an archery dandy.



Logan Burk (son of DB John) with his 2019 rifle buck.



Kye Garver (son of RD Jim) with a dandy IL 2019 bow buck.



Quin Allen (son of RD Mike) with his 2019 rifle buck.



Gary Payeur's of Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter with his Colorado mule deer.



Committee member for Nolan R Hutcheson Memorial Chapter, Don Knaeble, took this buck during muzzleloader season.



Larry Edwards of Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter and his Oklahoma wild boar.



State Board member Tim Hendershott took his moose this past fall on a 10 day hunt in Northern BC. He just missed B&C.



Tegan Jones an Ozark Mountain Gobblers JAKES.



Jay Herring is the president of the Lincoln Hills Chapter and is also a state board member with a hell of a bull!



Tyler Cooper NWTF Project Forester in Kingston with "a limit" ...take a full house to beat that pair.



R.L. Bennett President of the Sho Me Chapter and State Board Chair with a mature SWMO rifle buck.



Jack Keller Crawford County 8 pointer.



Nick Duckett harvested this doe during the youth rifle season.



Buck harvested by Brian Duckett in Williamsville, Missouri.



Lucas Mercurio harvested 3 ducks during the opening youth weekend in the south zone.



Clint Hendershott of Jackson, MO and his 2019 MO firearm buck and doe. He harvested them while hunting in Putnam County Mo. Clint is a member of the Locust Creek Longbeards.



Olivia Dillon, granddaughter of State Fair Strutters President, Chuck Mattingly, with her first archery harvest. Congratulations Oliva!

AMVETS Project Puts More Hunters Afield And Venison In The Freezer

Kingdom of Callaway Limbanger Committee Member, Kim Clark, is veteran of the Navy, so she has a special place in her heart for veterans and veterans causes. She had previously participated at an AMVETS Outdoors event herself and after talking with the founder, "Wild Bill Coomer," she decided she would like to see what she could do herself. AMVETS Outdoors uses a variety of outdoor activities (hunting, fishing, camping) and the passion and joy that these activities usually elicit, to create a community of support for our veterans. By reaching out to those outdoor enthusiasts that have an interest in "returning the favor" AMVETS Outdoors has been able to provide a growing number of these valuable events.

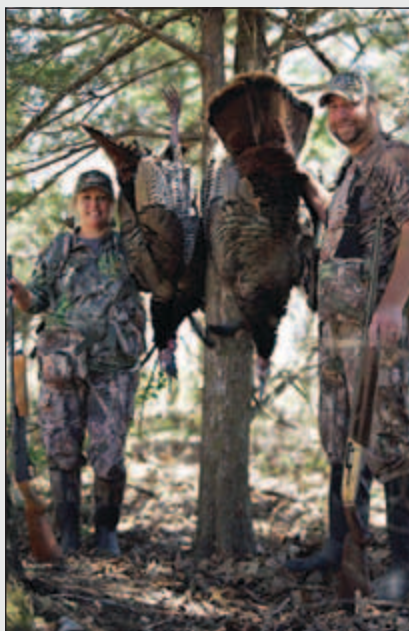
Kim reached out to fellow committee members Don Masek and Don Dettmann, as well as 2 other landowners Clint Miller and Joe Slayter. With 4 properties secured the plan was in motion to host 11 veterans to a week of deer hunting, camaraderie around the campfire, and awesome home cooked game dinners during the week of Missouri's firearm deer season. With 15 deer harvested by the 11 participants, the event was one of the most successful to date. All of the hunters were either first time deer hunters or had lapsed. Not only did the chapter support a very worthy cause but added to our hunter creation tally as well.



Congratulations to all the successful hunters.



NWTF members Tyler & Gina Jones each harvested a turkey with the Winchester SX4 Tyler won at the David Blanton Memorial Chapter Banquet. They are pictured with their nephew Layton (in the car) and their grandkids Gracelynn & Waylon. Hoping to instill the tradition of hunting turkey for many years to come.



Tyler and Gina Jones - NWTF members Tyler & Gina Jones each harvested a turkey with the Winchester SX4 Tyler won at the David Blanton Memorial Chapter Banquet.



Gina pictured with the new Winchester SX4 that will surely be a well used firearm for many future turkey seasons here in Missouri.

Waterfowl Clinic Keeps Hunter Numbers Growing

The Big Muddy Duck Hunt (BMDH) - Youth Waterfowl Clinic is an annual, community-based waterfowl hunting event, designed to enhance waterfowl hunting in Holt County and Northwest Missouri through the recruitment of new hunters and the retention of those who already enjoy the sport. It is a collaborative effort from corporate sponsorship, private duck clubs, state government, and local waterfowl enthusiasts to invest in the future of waterfowl hunting. The goals of BMDH are similar to ours dovetailing seamlessly into our Save the Hunt goals for Missouri and, as such, we have been able to help this group with equipment needed to support their efforts over the past few years through our super fund.



Over the October 26th and 27th weekend, BMDH concluded their 2019 Big Muddy Duck Hunt - Youth Waterfowl Clinic where 28 volunteers helped host and mentor 11 new hunters. The BMDH are grateful for our as well as

the Station Instructors, Guides, Safety Coaches, duck clubs providing blinds, private donors, corporate sponsors, and agencies who all played a part in this successful event. It would not be the quality/once-in-a-lifetime clinic that it is without this type of support.

The group is already preparing for their 2020 BMDH. That being said, if you have or know of any kids 11-15 years of age (on the date of the clinic) please register/have them register at: www.bigmuddyduckhunt.org. They sometimes fill-up months in advance.

Spring is a Great Time to Monitor for Invasive Species in the Turkey Woods

By Justin Ferguson
NWTF Project Forester

By the time this article reaches you, the fall hunting seasons will have come and gone. I am sure that you are anxiously waiting for winter to break, ushering in warmer weather and the first gobbles of spring and the spring turkey season that many of us live for. While going about your spring turkey scouting and hunting activities on lands that you own or manage, it is a perfect time to monitor for one of the biggest threats to the health of forest communities and the future of the wildlife habitat resources that we cherish.

Invasive plants are non-native, introduced species that compete directly for space, sunlight, water and other resources relied on by native plants communities that provide critical habitat for our wildlife, including wild turkey. Many invasive species have adaptations from their native environment that allow them to easily outcompete native flora. Often, these species are not consumed by insect or animal pests that would normally regulate

their abundance and do not provide the same nutrition or other wildlife value that native plants do. There are dozens of invasive or exotic plants that are of concern in Missouri, but I would like to call attention to the three species that I encounter as a forester on a regular basis: Bush honeysuckle, autumn olive and multiflora rose.

Bush honeysuckle, autumn olive and multiflora rose are all woody species. Bush honeysuckle and autumn olive are rapid growing shrubs that can reach heights of nearly 20 feet. Multiflora rose grows into a shrubby bush with very sharp thorns and can climb nearby vegetation to some extent. All three of these species produce a fruit that is consumed and spread by birds or other wildlife. These species are of concern because, left unchecked, they can take over a site and create nearly impenetrable monoculture thickets casting dense shade to the forest floor. This shade prevents the growth of grasses and forbs beneficial to wildlife, and regeneration of trees that are critical to long-term forest health and value. There is evidence

that bush honeysuckle and autumn olive are allelopathic, meaning they produce biochemicals that influence the growth and health of surrounding plants to limit competition. This gives them a tremendous advantage, as native species are not adapted to compete. When these invasive species become established in the understory of a forest, nothing can grow below them. As overstory trees eventually die from natural or human causes, they will not be replaced by regeneration. It is easy to see long-term wildlife habitat and economic value implications if this is allowed to occur on a wooded property.

I encourage anyone taking to the field this spring to brush up on their plant identification skills and learn what these three invasive species look like. A slow morning in the turkey woods is a great time to look. Identification resources are easily found online with a little research. The Missouri Department of Conservation has a wealth of material online to assist with identification of invasive species present in the state. All three of these species are particularly easy to

identify in the early spring because they typically leaf out earlier than most native vegetation. The same can be said for the fall, as they hold on to their leaves longer. When the rest of the forest is still dark and dormant, the first flush of green vegetation really stands out. Often invasive species first establish on forest edges, making them a good starting point to monitor. In agricultural areas, this could be where forests meet fields or pastures. In the Ozarks, utility rights-of way or roads are good examples of edge. Unchecked establishment of these plants are ecological and economic disasters for any property, and early detection makes for easier treatment.

If you do identify invasive species on your property, all is not lost. Fortunately, landowners and managers in Missouri have great resources available. Our friends and partners at the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service provide technical assistance to landowners looking to manage their forest and wildlife resources, including invasive species management. Contacting the MDC Private Lands Conservationist for your county is a good place to start.

It's A Digital World

By Mike Allen — Regional Director

It seems like everything these days is online. There are apps that will tell you best times to hunt and fish, apps that will show you the lay of the land, and who owns it, and you can check the weather any time of the day or night....it is a digital world. I really enjoy the MO Hunting app, you can purchase your hunting license, deer and turkey tags, and you can notch it, and telecheck it, all on your phone. It sure is handy, no worrying about paper tags, and having to tie it to your harvest. My standard procedure is to notch the proper tag, telecheck it, and then start taking pictures with my smart phone. Next move is to message that picture to my buddies, and maybe post it to facebook. Usually that is all done within 10 minutes.....it is a digital world. How many of you use the internet to shop? You can check out anything, and everything, and never have to leave the turkey blind or deer stand...it is a digital world.

The NWTF is working hard to adapt to these changes and maximize our efficiency. Over the next 3-5 years, the NWTF is planning to make

strides in improving our online presence. This will include improvement to our website, and internal systems, which will make it easier for staff to provide the chapters with the assistance they require.

For those of you that serve on committees, in 2020 we will no longer send in the ticket stubs to register memberships. In 2018, we started sending an Excel spreadsheet to the chapters which listed everyone that was a member at the previous year's banquet. Several chapters have adopted this new way of administering their membership information and found that it was easier and more efficient. Having the list of all members from the previous year, they simply highlighted the folks that bought tickets, checked to ensure the address had not changed, and removed anyone that did not attend. That spreadsheet is then emailed to the office in Edgefield, and can be uploaded. This minimizes errors born of incorrect or illegible information, expedites the renewal process, and prevents lags in membership due to the difference in time of mailing a banquet report, and membership cards, and getting them all entered by hand into the system.

We are also moving forward in asking attendees to purchase their tickets online. Each banquet has a link that allows folks to go directly to that chapter's banquet site. Your regional director can set that site to offer any type of ticket, including gun of the year and sportsmen's raffle tickets. You can find the link on our website, nwtf.org or you can simply have your RD email it to you. It is easy to send on to your attendees, and if they purchase online, they will enter their address correctly, and legibly! Also, if you can convince them to purchase online, you will not have to make more than one trip. No more dropping off tickets, going back to pick them up, and possibly going back again to get the check. I understand that not everyone is going to purchase online, we will still have paper tickets, but the more that do, the easier things get.

The 501 system we currently use for the online ticket sales allows us to download the spreadsheet to send in for the memberships. An additional efficiency made possible by the 501 system is a speedy checkout. Once folks "buy in" and purchase online, the process at the door is as simple as a couple of clicks and you're done. Your regional director can authorize anyone you designate as an

Continued on page 12.

Missouri Hunting Heritage Banquets

Honey Creek Strutters

01/11/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Chad Foreman (816) 564-7821
 Location: Cameron Community Center
 915 N. Ashland Dr., Cameron, MO 64429

Springtown Wattlenecks

01/17/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Troy & Diane O'dell (816) 506-9422
 Location: Annunciation Community Center
 705 North Jefferson Street
 Kearney, MO 64060

Shaky Ground Gobblers

01/17/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Walter Campbell (573) 380-7928
 Location: K of C Hall
 Hwy U, New Madrid, MO 63869

Current River Callers

01/18/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Troy McAfee (573) 325-4930
 Location: Winona School
 Hwy 19 North, Winona, MO 65588

Perry County Beards and Spurs

01/18/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Dominic Blythe (573) 768-0878
 Location: ELKS Lodge
 HWY 51 East, Perryville, MO 63775

Union Covered Bridge Gobblers

01/18/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Bruce Mills (573) 721-2268
 Location: Madison Community Building
 115 South Main St, Madison, MO 65263

Salt River Sharp Spurs

01/24/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Jason Pollard (573) 248-4976
 Location: Father Buhman Center
 103 S. 4th, Shelbina, MO 63469

Reynolds County

01/24/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Gary Black (573) 637-2110
 Location: Reynolds County Fairgrounds
 Hwy O, Redford, MO 63665

Ray County Shortspurs

01/25/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Mark Mccorkendale Family
 (816) 217-7496
 Location: Ray Co Veterans Memorial Bldg
 312 Clark St, Richmond, MO 64085

Rogersville Strutters

01/31/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Cody Wilson (417) 838-2451
 Location: First Baptist Church
 101 West Center St
 Rogersville, MO 65742

Walt Beumer Memorial Chapter

01/31/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Brian Duckett (314) 574-9213
 Location: The Boeing Machinist Building
 212 Utz Lane, Hazelwood, MO 63042

Tick Ridge

02/01/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Dan Coons (660) 415-6842
 Location: Macon CO Expo Center
 Hwy 63 S, Macon, MO 63552

Chariton River Full Strutters

02/01/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Powered By: Jordan Harmon (660) 247-5306
 Location: Knight and Rucker Building
 Broadway, Brunswick, MO 65236

Gateway Long Spurs

02/01/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Daniel Zerr (636) 278-3544
 Location: St. Theodore Catholic Church Gym
 5051 Hwy P, Flint Hill, MO 63385

Black Mountain Longbeards

02/01/2020 - 4:30 PM
 Contact: Jason Wengler (573) 783-9988
 Location: St Michaels Catholic School
 Main, Fredericktown, MO 63645

Delta Bootheel Gobblers

02/04/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Rickie Branch (573) 576-2955
 Location: American Legion Hall Kennett
 1615 First Street, Kennett, MO 63857

Swampeast Strutters

02/06/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Kevin Miller (573) 683-3307
 Location: United Methodist Church
 1700 E. Marshall, Charleston, MO 63834

Summit Ridge Longbeards

02/07/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Glenn Farris (573) 690-6425
 Location: St Andrews Church Viets Hall
 Holts Summit, MO 65043

Fabius River Fantails

02/08/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Jeremy Holman (660) 341-8823
 Location: Community Center
 207 N. 4th St., Edina, MO 63537

Bootheel Boss Gobblers

02/08/2020 - 4:00 PM
 Contact: Bronson Senn (573) 225-3087
 Location: Bavarian Hall
 Jct I-55 and US Hwy 61 N @ Fruitland
 Jackson, MO 63755

Upper Meramec Longspurs

02/21/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Shane Staples (573) 259-7405
 Location: Recklein Auditorium
 304 North Smith Street
 Cuba, MO 65453

Kingdom of Callaway Limbangers

02/21/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: John Burk (573) 676-5994
 Location: 54 Country
 400 Gaylord Drive, Fulton, MO 65251

Lead Belt Longbeards

02/22/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Kathryn Wolff (573) 701-2050
 Location: Knights of Columbus Bonne Terre
 7897 Berry Rd, Bonne Terre, MO 63628

Moniteau Monarchs

02/22/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Brian Hill (573) 796-3885
 Location: Knights of Columbus
 Highway 50, Tipton, MO 65081

South Grand River Gobblers

02/22/2020 - 5:30 PM (CST)
 Contact: Joshua Stafford (816) 289-8921
 Location: Cass County Elks Lodge
 2402 N Hwy 291, Harrisonville, MO 64701

Lincoln Hills

02/22/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: R.jay Herring (314) 486-8581
 Location: Sacred Heart Parrish
 714 Lincoln Street, Elsberry, MO 63343

Sand Burr Strutters

02/28/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Shane Washburn (573) 380-2923
 Location: VFW
 709 Smith Street, Sikeston, MO 63801

Platte Purchase

02/28/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Bryan Lukehart (816) 244-6858
 Location: Fraternal Order of Eagles
 2004 N Belt Hwy, St. Joseph, MO 64503

Hickory County Jakes and Jennies

02/28/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Tim Pratt (417) 298-5690
 Location: Hickory County Senior Center
 Highway 54, Wheatland, MO 65779

Nemo

02/29/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Melissa Sharkey (573) 257-9894
 Location: Quality Inn
 120 Lindsey Drive, Hannibal, MO 63401

Stealth Gobblers

02/29/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Michael Brandt (660) 238-2994
 Location: Elks Lodge
 822 E. Young St., Warrensburg, MO 64093

Current River Longbeards

03/05/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Delbert Dewolf (573) 660-1114
 Location: So MO Baptist Assembly
 HC 1 Box 200, Van Buren, MO 63965

Lake Show-Me Longbeards

03/06/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Chris Comstock (660) 216-0034
 Location: VFW Post 4958
 123 W. Monroe, Memphis, MO 63555

Osage Prairie Thunderin Toms

03/06/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: Adam Dean (417) 448-7380
 Location: Eagles Lodge
 East Austin Blvd, Nevada, MO 64772

Parkville Gobblers

03/06/2020 - 6:00 PM
 Contact: John Shene (816) 365-2856
 Location: Parkville Athletic Complex
 6014 N. 9 Hwy, Parkville, MO 64152

Cooper County Limbangers

03/07/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Vaughn Sell (660) 882-7833
 Location: Knights of Columbus Hall
 1515 Radio Hill Road, Boonville, MO 65233

Mark Twain Forest Longspurs

03/07/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Tony Hollinsworth
 (573) 854-0497
 Location: Potosi Lions Club
 Highway 185, Potosi, MO 63664

Sho-Me

03/07/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: R.I. Bennett (417) 840-3949
 Location: White River Conference Center
 600 West Sunshine, Springfield, MO 65806

Bayou Strutters

03/10/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Larry & Diane Neal (314) 334-4942
 Location: Cedars Banquet and Gatherings
 401 East Washington, East Prairie, MO 63845

Lewis County Strutters

03/13/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Ron Richardson (660) 341-9398
 Location: Queen of Peace Parish
 Ewing, MO 63440

Heartland Gobblers

03/14/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Chuck Stewart (573) 421-1257
 Location: AMERICAN LEGION
 2320 Kanell Blvd, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901

Polk County Hillbilly Longbeards

03/14/2020 - 5:00 PM
 Contact: Todd Grant (417) 399-4534
 Location: Smiths Restaurant
 Hwy 13 South, Bolivar, MO 65613

Randolph County Longbeards

03/14/2020 - 5:30 PM
 Contact: Larry Terry (660) 651-8636
 Location: Jackson Bros Catering
 2060 N. Morley St, Moberly, MO 65270

MORE
Missouri Hunting
Heritage Banquets
can be found online.

NWTF/QF/MDC/MPF Cooperative New Hunter Recruitment Dove Field Initiative 2019

As part of the National Wild Turkey Federation's (NWTF) Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt. initiative, Missouri initiated a new hunter recruitment program at the beginning of the initiative in partnership with Quail Forever (QF), the Conservation Federation of Missouri, the Missouri Prairie Foundation, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (ACE), and Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). In an effort to attract new hunters into the sport, 10 dove fields were initially planned for establishment in different regions throughout the state on private land. As a result of the

unusually wet spring and early summer only 6 fields were able to be planted.

This project, from start to finish, was an excellent example of the true value of a cooperative effort in that all partner agencies and organizations gave equally of their resources to make it a success. MDC Private Land Services paid for the seed, herbicide, fertilizer and contracted installation costs of establishing the fields. We did not have access to Clearfield sunflowers through our Conservation Seed Program this year so we

were not able to get the seed at the greatly reduced cost of \$35/bag. All partners helped promote the opportunity and MDC and QF conducted some workshops to educate the new hunters. QF was very instrumental in locating landowners that provided 3 of the fields and also planted the fields. This year The Missouri Farmers Association also participated by photographing the Callaway field at various stages of development including the hunt. The photos will be featured in a spring 2020 edition of their magazine and will include information about the program and dove field management.

Field	Total Acres	Total Hunts	Total Experienced Hunters	Total New Hunters	Total Hunters
Monroe1	10	3	19	19	38
Monroe2	20	1	5	5	10
Callaway	8	3	12	12	24
Franklin	10	4	18	18	36
Newton	12	2	11	11	22
Livingston	10	1	3	3	6
Totals	70	14	68	68	136

Table 1: reveals numbers associated with the program including: 70 acres planted enabling 14 hunts to be conducted involving 68 mentors and creating 68 new hunters. The total cost of the program was \$20,310.90 with \$12,038.60 spent on seed and herbicide, \$2,885 for contracting, \$2,909.30 for fertilizer, and \$2,478 for fencing. Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$149.39/hunter and \$298.69/hunter created.

Table 1: Counties where dove fields were planted, acres planted, number of hunts, number of mentors/experienced hunters, number of new hunters, and total number of hunters during the 2019 mentored dove hunting program.

Table 2 reveals total numbers associated with the 6 year program. The total cost of the program was \$89,693 with \$42,570 spent on seed and herbicide, \$20,542 for contracting some of the fields, \$24,104 for fertilizer, and \$2,478 for fencing. Therefore, providing this opportunity cost \$63.39/hunter and \$151.25/hunter created.

Counties	Fields	Total Acres	Total Hunts	Total Experienced Hunters	Total New Hunters	Total Hunters
19	47	572	102	822	593	1,415

Although Mother Nature wasn't very kind to us in 2019 the program was still successful and we plan to provide it again in 2020. If you have any interest in possibly participating in the program either as a participant, mentor, or field donor please contact John Burk at 573-676-5994 or by e-mailing jburk@nwtf.net.

Order Your Spring Seed Here!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: (_____) _____

Number of bags of RR corn (5 bag limit) _____ (\$35.00/50lb. bag)

Number of bags of sunflower (if avail.) _____ (\$35.00/40lb. bag)

Number of bags of RR soybeans (old) _____ (\$10.00 > 60% \$5.00 < 60%)

Number of bags of milo _____ (\$10.00/50lb. bag)

Please check your preferred pick up location:

Cape Girardeau Kirksville St. Joseph St. Peters

Things to know about our seed program:

The year-old or older seed that makes our program possible has a germination rate of greater than 60% (most is greater than 80%) or we wouldn't offer it.

We had a lot of beans left over from last year that we will test. If they test at greater than 60% they will be offered at the same price as what we order for 2020. If they test between 40 and 60% they will be offered for half price.

This is a national program so how much seed we get is dependent upon national supply and demand. Therefore, placing an order only guarantees that you will get the seed IF it becomes available.

I order based upon past demand and although we MAY have seed available for walk-ins, we will NOT release any seed to folks that have not placed an order until those that did have been served.

We do not control when the seed gets here but it has always been well within the planting window.

The delivery locations will be Cape Girardeau, Kirksville, St. Joseph, and St. Peters. Seed location coordinators will contact everyone on the list associated with their site once the seed arrives.

All distribution sites will likely have seed days. The dates and times available for seed pickup will be determined by the coordinators of those sites once the seed arrives. You will be notified of these dates by the coordinators of those sites.

The seed we can most likely count on will be Roundup Ready corn, Roundup Ready soybeans, and milo. The beans left over from last year are Liberty Link. Clearfield sunflowers may or may not be available but we have ordered some for Missouri if they do become available. Same rules apply, you **MUST** be a member to purchase the seed, it **CANNOT** be harvested, and the limit on corn is 5 bags per member.

If you are interested in ordering some seed, please fill out the information below and return it to John Burk, 7152 Tomahawk Lane, Steedman MO 65077 or e-mail me the same information to jburk@nwtf.net.

It's A Digital World ... continued from page 9.

administrator for your event, and you can access the system. You will receive an email whenever anyone makes a purchase. If you enter the winning silent auction bids, and the live auction bids, and make adjustments for tabs, the system will tell you what each "bidder" owes. If they would like to pay with their card on file, which is usually the one they originally purchased their tickets with, it is a matter of a key stroke. The system will email them a receipt, and that is that. They can still pay with cash, checks, or a different card. The most difficult part of the entire 501 system is simply getting everyone entered. I encourage you to visit with your regional director about getting on board and utilizing the 501 system at your 2020 event.

For those of you who are not committee members I have a couple of requests. First, please consider volunteering. Nationally the number of hunters continues to decline. We have got to reverse this trend or hunting may become irrelevant in the not too distant future. By serving on a committee, you will be helping to ensure the NWTF continues to be at the forefront of the conservation world. Our focal areas are being talked about across the county an examples of what to do to increase habitat and opportunities for hunters. We can make a tremendous difference, but there is a lot of work still to do. You can also volunteer to mentor aspiring hunters and outdoors persons. Showing others the outdoor world that we all enjoy, and growing the numbers of hunters and conservationists, will help leave a legacy that will stand the test of time.

The second thing I would ask of everyone, follow that link and purchase your ticket to the banquet online. I cannot tell you the number of times one of the membership staff has emailed me about a ticket from a banquet that they cannot read, it has no address, or some other issue. I wish I could tell them I know every single person that attended a banquet in my area, but I can't. In 2019 the 30 banquets that I oversaw had nearly 4300 attendees. I want everyone that attends to receive their membership, magazine, and everything else that and NWTF membership brings.

The National Wild Turkey Federation
Show-Me Gobbler
c/o Bernard R. (Bernie) Grice, Jr.
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Columbia, MO 65201-7224

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April 15, July 15 & November 30

NWTF exceeds 1.5 ... continued from page 1.

partners working hand-in-hand to boost hunter numbers, but we won't stop there," said Mandy Harling, NWTF director of Hunting Heritage Programs. "Even though we've reached and exceeded our goal, there is more work to do. With such a large force of partners working in concert, there's no telling where this momentum will carry us."

The NWTF already exceeded its goal of opening hunting access to 500,000 new acres by 2022. As of Sept. 1, the NWTF has opened up more than 626,000 acres to public hunting and recreational use.

"This is just one more example of how our chapters, volunteers and partners are focusing efforts for the benefit of wildlife, natural resources and the hunting lifestyle," Humphries said. "Together, we will continue to capitalize on opportunities around the U.S. to open land to hunters, reducing an impediment that historically keeps people from hunting while providing new and veteran hunters places to go."

LUCAS OIL
Speedway

VIEW THE FULL 2019 SCHEDULE
ON LUCASOILSPEEDWAY.COM

Map showing the location of Lucas Oil Speedway in Wheatland, MO, with nearby towns like Buffalo, Springfield, and various highways (13, 54, 65) indicated.

18842 SPEEDWAY DR. | WHEATLAND, MO 65779 | 417-282-5984